

ing our employment and our employer ; and when satisfied, he began, I perceived, like the Highlander of the previous evening, to express very profound commiseration for me. "Is that man also pitying me?" I asked. "O yes, very much," was the reply: "he does not at all see how you are to live in Gairloch without Gaelic." I was reminded by the shieling and its happy inmate, of one of my father's experiences, as communicated to me by Uncle James. In the course of a protracted kelp voyage among the Hebrides, he had landed in his boat, before entering one of the sounds of the Long Island, to procure a pilot, but found in the fisherman's cottage on which he had directed his course, only the fisherman's wife,—a young creature of not more than eighteen,—engaged in nursing her child and singing a Gaelic song, in tones expressive of a light heart, till the rocks rang again. A heath bed, a pot of baked clay, of native manufacture, fashioned by the hand, and a heap of fish newly caught, seemed to constitute the only wealth of the cottage ; but its mistress was, notwithstanding, one of the happiest of women ; and deeply did she commiserate the poor sailors, and earnestly wish for the return of her husband, that he might assist them in their perplexity. The husband at length appeared. "O," he asked, "after the first greeting, "have ye any salt?" "Plenty," said the master ; "and you, I see, from your supply of fresh fish, want it very much ; but come, pilot us through the sound, and you shall have as much salt as you require." And so the vessel got a pilot and the fisherman got salt ; but never did my father forget the light-hearted song of the happy mistress of that poor Highland cottage. It was one of the palpable characteristics of our Scottish Highlanders, for at least the first thirty years of the century, that they were contented enough, as a people, to find more to pity than to envy in the condition of their neighbors ; and I remember that at this time, and for years after, I used to deem the trait a good one. I have now, however, my doubts on the subject, and am not quite sure whether a content so general as to be national may not, in certain circumstances, be rather a vice than a virtue. It is certainly no virtue when it has the